

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1502

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COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE  
APPROPRIATIONS  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS  
SMALL BUSINESS

David M. Walker  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker,

In April 2005 the Government Accountability Office completed a report on the United States Postal Service's strategy for realigning and consolidating its mail processing operations. Eight months later, the Postal Service appears to have made little progress in implementing the GAO's recommendations to develop a clear, transparent, and consistently applied process that includes stakeholder consultation and communication and includes specific management criteria and performance measures.

Given that the Postal Service is now proceeding with close to 50 Area Mail Processing (AMP) studies on consolidation that provide no opportunity for local communities, business people and other stakeholders to either provide input or hear the Postal Service's reasoning behind their decision making at any stage of the process, I am requesting that the GAO undertake a follow-up study.

The study should address three concerns. First, what are the Postal Service's criteria for making its mail processing consolidation decisions and how does the Postal Service plan to communicate these decisions to stakeholders? Second, to what extent do stakeholders affected by the Postal Service's consolidation decisions believe that the Postal Service's criteria and communications about its consolidation plans and decisions is clear? Third, how does the Postal Service plan to obtain and use input from stakeholders regarding its planned consolidations and how does it plan to respond to their concerns?

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin  
United States Senator